



AUSA BACKGROUND BRIEF



THE FUTURE U.S. ARMY: OUTLOOK FOR THE 1990's

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THE ROLE OF THE U.S. ARMY IN EUROPE IN THE 1990s: BEYOND CFE

SUMMARY OF REMARKS BY

CONGRESSMAN DAVE McCURDY
(Chairman, United States Congressional Army Caucus)

The remarks of Congressman McCurdy were delivered on 25 April 1990 at the fourth in a series of eight guest speaker presentations to be held for members of Congress and their staffs. The series is co-sponsored by the AUSA Institute of Land Warfare and the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis. The overall theme of the series is "The Future U.S. Army: Outlook for the 1990's." A separate Background Brief will be issued on each of the eight topics to be presented.

Congressman Dave McCurdy believes that of all the Services, the Army is "out ahead" in developing flexible forces for a changing global security environment. Historically, however, the Army has suffered from a relative inability to make its case known and understood in the budget process on Capitol Hill and has in many ways been the least visible of the Services. For this reason, McCurdy formed the Army Caucus as a means of developing a dialogue between the Army and members of Congress. This effort has been successful, but faces a great many challenges brought on by changes in the international environment.

McCurdy is concerned that the United States is allowing the opportunity for leadership in a fast-changing Eastern Europe to slip away because of financial restrictions and because of a lack of political initiative. Exactly at the time when our longest-standing policies are bearing fruit in the birth and growth of new democracies in the nations of the former Soviet Bloc, the United States appears largely unable or unwilling to offer the leadership these countries need to survive and ultimately to prosper. McCurdy suggests that the United States must move on from its policy of containment to a policy of attainment, to attain a more peaceful, prosperous, democratic world, and the greatest U.S. contribution to Europe would be stability in the face of potential national, ethnic and religious unrest.

In the area of defense, McCurdy is prepared to accept numerical cuts in forces in return for continued high levels of quality in remaining forces. He supports measures which will enhance the ability of the Services to attract individuals with strong records to career military service. He favors the quick development of a new light helicopter for the Army, advanced armor systems and investment in high technology applications (i.e., hyper-velocity missile).

With regard to future deployments of U.S. forces abroad, he suggests that the Administration's recommended levels of 195,000 U.S. troops in the Central Zone in Europe (with 30,000 additional troops elsewhere in the theater) are too high, but that Senator Nunn's recent proposal for reductions to a level of 75,000 was too low to allow U.S. commanders to carry out their mission.

McCurdy favors retention of at least a corps-sized U.S. force in Europe. He argues that the United States must make concrete decisions on which training sites, bases, and other installations abroad are absolutely critical to the U.S. defense effort so that they can be retained in the face of demands for widespread U.S. withdrawals.

U.S. forces deployed in Europe must be structured not on the basis of defending specifically-demarcated territory; instead, they should strive for the greatest degree of flexibility and mobility possible.

McCurdy believes that conventional forces must be of the highest priority in United States force modernization efforts. As part of this effort, the United States must increase its air- and sealift capability and ensure maritime superiority. At the same time, the United States must take measures to protect its technology base. He suggested that a level of 12 carrier battle groups would be an appropriate force to meet global power projection demands.

McCurdy views strategic nuclear force modernization as the least important of U.S. defense priorities, and suggests that the United States re-examine its strategic posture with an eye toward taking advantage of Soviet political weakness which could yield substantial progress in the realm of START negotiations.